CHRISTIANIZED RATIONALISM AND THE HIGHER CRITICISM

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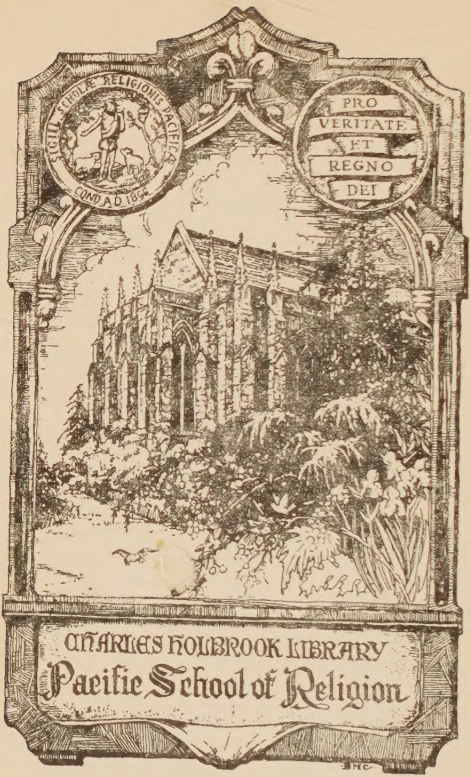
SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, K.C.B. LL. D.



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Christianized Rationalism and The Higher Criticism

A REPLY TO PROFESSOR HARNACK'S
"WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY"

BY
SIR ROBERT ANDERSON, K. C. B., LL. D.
Formerly Chief of the
Criminal Investigation Department, London

AUTHOR OF
"THE BIBLE AND MODERN CRITICISM," "THE BUDDHA OF CHRISTENDOM," "THE SILENCE OF GOD," "DANIEL IN THE CRITICS' DEN," ETC., ETC.

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"The same principles which at first view lead to scepticism, pursued to a certain point, bring men back to commen sense."—*Bishop Berkeley.*

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A REPLY TO PROFESSOR HARNACK'S "WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY?"

I. INTRODUCTORY.

ONE of the most striking features of religious thought to-day is the honour paid to the Founder of Christianity by those who reject His claims to divine homage. With the cultured Jew the once execrated Nazarene is now held in respect as one of the great Rabbis of the past. With the cultured infidel the coarse hatred of Voltaire has given place to the exquisite admiration of Renan. The change is most grateful to the Christian. But it is not without its perils. There is a real danger lest the gulf should be ignored which lies between a generous appreciation of the greatest of religious teachers and the spiritual worship of our Divine Saviour and Lord. And this danger is intensified when the homage comes

from one who claims a place within the camp of faith, and when it is clothed in the very words of Scripture—words which to Christian ears seem to carry with them the acknowledgment that He is divine.

These thoughts are suggested by the study of Professor Harnack's *What is Christianity?** In striking contrast with the dreary periods of Strauss's *New Life of Jesus*, these pages glow with life and sympathy; and the reader is carried along by charms of style and diction, which even the ordeal of translation into English has failed to destroy. And more than this, the use of New Testament terminology seems to assure us that we are in touch with the great facts and truths of Christianity. For here we read of "the kingdom of God," "the Messiah," "the Son of God," "the God-man," "the expiatory death" of Him who "was proclaimed as 'the Lord,' not only because He had died for sinners, but because He was the risen and the living One," the Bearer of "the glad message assuring us of eternal life."

This is well fitted to deceive the superficial.

* *What is Christianity?* Sixteen lectures delivered in the University of Berlin. Translated into English by Thos. Bailey Saunders. (Williams & Norgate, London.)

But the careful reader recognizes that it is but the husk from which all that is vital in Christian truth has disappeared. To give a new reading to an old text, we might say that "the voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau." For the phraseology represents not the divinely accredited realities on which the Christian's faith is founded, but merely ideas suggested to the minds of the disciples by the public facts of their Master's ministry and death. "Reconciler" has become a term of reproach. But in a new sense Dr. Harnack is a champion reconciler. We knew that Christianity—so indestructible is its vital force—could survive the pressure of a weight of Rationalism; his aim has been to prove that Rationalism can adopt the whole *apparatus* of the Christian creed. The corruption of Christianity by Rationalism is no new thing; but he has shown us that Rationalism pure and simple can disguise itself in a Christian dress.

II. PROF. HARNACK'S SCHEME.

But though his lectures are apt to deceive the many, he himself is chargeable with no sinister intention. For his scheme is disclosed

in his opening words. His purpose is "to remind mankind" "that a man of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in their midst."* To the devout Jew and to the intelligent Christian the meaning of "Jesus Christ" is "Jesus the Messiah"—a divine title of supreme solemnity and honour. But to the world in general it has no such significance. It merely designates the "historic Jesus" who lived and died nineteen centuries ago; and if reverent thoughts or religious emotions are aroused at the mention of the name, it is because the mind turns back to a remote past, not upward to the throne where the Lord of life and glory sits on the right hand of God.

And so here the question, "What is Christianity?" does not find answer in the divine revelation of which the Lord Jesus Christ is the sum and substance, but resolves itself into "the purely historical theme: What is the Christian religion?"† The spiritual Christian has learned to distinguish between Christianity and "the Christian religion," but Prof. Harnack makes no such distinction. For not even "the historic Jesus" himself will afford

*p. 1. †pp. 6, 9.

"the materials" for his inquiry; "he must include the first generation of His disciples as well."* Nor will even this suffice. For, he tells us, "Jesus Christ and His disciples were situated in their day just as we are situated in ours; that is to say, their feelings, their thoughts, their judgments, and their efforts were bounded by the horizon and the framework in which their own nation was set, and by its condition at the time."† This being so, our "materials" must not be limited even to the life and teaching of "Jesus Christ and His disciples:" to ascertain aright what is Christianity "we must include all the later products of its spirit."‡

But, of course, "Jesus Christ" and His "message" are of principal importance. What, then, are "our authorities" here? The answer is, *in words*, "the first three gospels."§ "In words," I say; for let no one suppose that he may accept any one of the three as trustworthy. If the Rationalist would leave us even a single book of the New Testament, the foundations of our faith, however narrowed, would at least be secure. But before the wor-

*p. 10. †p. 12. ‡p. 10. §p. 19.

shipper can betake himself to the sanctuary he must repair to the professor's classroom to learn how much or how little of all on which his faith rests has escaped in the general wreck.

III. DR. HARNACK REJECTS THE INCARNATION, THE RESURRECTION AND THE ATONEMENT.

His first staggering blow will be the discovery that "the history of Jesus' birth" is worthless. "Two of the gospels do, it is true, contain it," but yet "we may disregard it."* The Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the Son of God, must thus give place to Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph; a man whose mind was warped by a petty, provincial environment,† whose religious teaching, therefore taxes our ingenity to discriminate between the element of kernel and of husk,‡ a man who believed in such "absurdities" as "stories of demons,"§ and whose views on social questions were biased by "his eschatological ideas and his particular horizon."‖

The next blow to faith will be the discovery

*p. 30. †p. 12. ‡p. 55. §p. 58. ‖p. 101.

that the resurrection is a mere "belief." Here again what has been said about the birth applies: the language used is that of Christianity, but that is all. "Whatever may have happened at the grave and in the matter of the appearances, one thing is certain" we are told, "This grave was the birthplace of the indestructible belief that death is vanquished, that there is a life eternal."* "Whatever may have happened;" for, as the author says, "It is not our business to defend either the view which was taken of the death, or the idea that he had risen again."† "Views" and "ideas," not *facts*. The only facts left us are that there was once "a man called Jesus Christ," and that He died upon a cross. "The conviction that obtained in the apostolic age that the Lord had really appeared after His death on the cross may," Dr. Harnack tells us, "be regarded as a coefficient."‡ It is not that the *fact* of the appearances was "a coefficient," but merely the belief that there were appearances. And this distinction is emphasised by the context. For this statement immediately follows a reference to the "coefficient of a mistaken expectation of Christ's near return."

*p. 162. †p. 155. ‡p. 173.

"The Christian religion," so-called, abounds with delusions and frauds, and Dr. Harnack's "Christianity" is no better. "That Jesus' death on the cross was one of expiation" is also an "idea."* It belongs to a class of ideas that "respond to a religious need."† And, as the author adds, "history has decided in its favour, and we are beginning to get in touch with it." More than this, "everywhere that the just man suffers, an atonement is made which puts us to shame and purifies us."‡ "These are the ideas which have been suggested by Christ's death," and "they have taken shape in the firm conviction that by His death in suffering He did a definite work; that He did it 'for us.'"§

IV. DR. HARNACK REJECTS THE MIRACLES AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN.

Then there are the miracles. A friend of mine once averted a disaster by "healing" a man upon whom the safety of a party of travellers depended. Their hale, rough, mountain guide was seized with a sudden illness, and

* p. 156. † p. 157. ‡ p. 159. § p.159.

lay down to die. By the use of a strong will, and a bottle of hair-wash from his valise, he had the man on his feet again in half an hour. I once got him to tell the whole story to the late Sir Andrew Clark, and I remember well the response it evoked, uttered in Sir Andrew's staccato style: "I thoroughly believe in a gift of healing." So also does Prof. Harnack; and thus he is able to accept what I may call the everyday miracles of the ministry. For, he tells us, "historical science in the last generation has taken a great step in advance by learning to pass a more intelligent and benevolent judgment on those narratives."*

And yet, with strange inconsistency, he writes:—

"It is not miracles that matter; the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer and make a part of our experience."†

Now this entirely explodes the infidel argument against miracles. For the seeming force of that argument depends on the fallacy that a

* p. 24. † p. 30.

miracle is a violation of the laws of nature, whereas in fact it is but "the introduction of a new agent possessing new powers." Once we acknowledge a God who rules and governs and can "compel Nature,"* the credibility of divine miracles resolves itself into a question of evidence, and a refusal on *a priori* grounds to examine the evidence betokens sheer materialism or stupidity.

Take Joshua's miracle for example. "That the earth in its course stood still" (Dr. Harnack declares) "we shall never again believe."† Some of us never did believe it. Nor does the Bible state it. Joshua's prayer was that the sun might "be silent." And the record of what follows explains this Hebrew figure of speech: "The sun was silent in the half of the heaven and *hasted not to go down* a whole day." It is incongruous to say that "the sun *stood still* and hasted not to go down." When we say that a man did not haste to catch a

* Nature is, of course, but one sphere of God's government, and, therefore, to speak of God's "compelling Nature" seems incongruous. Upon this whole question of miracles I take the liberty of referring to my book, *The Silence of God*, especially chapter iii.

† p. 28.

train, we imply, not that he sat down, but that he went to the station slowly. And so here: the sun lingered in the [visible] half* of the heaven. And if we believe in a God who has power over "Nature," His retarding the rotation of the earth does not seem more wonderful than an engineer's "slowing down" the great wheel of a steam engine.

So much, then, for the miracles. As for the rest, Prof. Harnack's purpose being to reduce the facts and the phenomena of what he calls "Christianity" to the level of Rationalism, he reads the New Testament with a predetermination to refuse everything which clashes with his own system. Not only, therefore, is the story of the birth rejected, but also that wonderful narrative which he dismisses as "a curious story of a temptation." And the Messiahship, the eternal Sonship, and the atonement are,

* The word is so rendered with rare exceptions in all its one hundred and seventeen occurrences. The rendering "in the midst" suggests the grotesque idea that at noonday Joshua gave a drill-sergeant command to the sun to halt, and it stood still! Common sense might tell us that the need would not arise till the sun was sinking, and it became clear that the approach of night would enable the enemy to escape.

like the resurrection, relegated to the category of "ideas."

The Gospel of John, of course, goes overboard. It "does not emanate from the apostle John," and it "cannot be taken as an historical authority in the ordinary sense of the word."* The genuineness of the fourth gospel is too well established to be dismissed in this jaunty way by a wave of the hand. If in any other sphere than that of religious controversy a writer were to treat in such a contemptuous fashion the convictions and conclusions of scholars and thinkers as competent and trustworthy as himself, he would be told—well, he would be told what Prof. Harnack needs to be told here. But I will leave it to someone else to say, for I am neither a scholar nor a university professor nor a professional theologian.

But I may claim to be, at least, as competent as he is to discriminate between fact and fiction, to detect a fraud, to pursue an inquiry which requires practical acquaintance with the science of evidence. I propose, therefore, to bring his methods to bear upon his own position. A sceptic both by temperament and by training,

* p. 19.

I propose to examine his scheme from the standpoint of scepticism—thorough, relentless scepticism.

V. DR. HARNACK'S SCHEME TESTED. HIS JESUS IS NOT OUR DIVINE LORD AND SAVIOUR.

And let no one be either stumbled or offended by my words. When I here speak of "Jesus" I am referring to Prof. Harnack's Buddha, the mythical founder and hero of his Neo-Christianity. I am absolutely incapable of speaking, or even of thinking, of our Divine Lord and Saviour in this free and easy fashion. If a book about Wilhelm II. of Germany never once accorded him his imperial title we should know how to account for the omission. To attribute it to accident or "style" would be absurd. And from the first page of these lectures to the last the Lord Jesus or the Lord Jesus Christ is not named as much as once.* In this respect the German Rationalist may be bracketed with the French infidel.

* The invariable use in this book of capital letters in all pronouns that refer to God, and the invariable absence of them for "Jesus," is a straw that indicates the current of his mind.

And yet there is a difference. Renan's denial of the deity of Christ does not restrain his enthusiastic homage as he contemplates the supreme tragedy of Calvary. But enthusiasm is vulgar; and Prof. Harnack's fastidious culture forbids his being betrayed into the least semblance of emotion in presence of the Cross. Here are the words of an avowed infidel; with what a sense of relief we turn to them from the perusal of these pages, penned by a professing Christian:—

"Rest now in Thy glory! Thy work is achieved, thy divinity established. . . A thousand times more loved since thy death than during the days of thy pilgrimage here below, thou shalt become so truly the corner-stone of humanity that to tear thy name from this world were to shake it to its foundations. Between thee and God men shall distinguish no longer. Thou hast utterly vanquished death, take possession of thy kingdom."*

But to return to Prof. Harnack's scheme. "The teaching of Jesus" is the basis of it. But what do we know of his teaching? Let me test this by an illustration. The Judge's charge

* Renan's *Life of Jesus*, chap. xxv.

to the Grand Jury in opening the assizes for a county always commands attention in Ireland. And for some years I used to supply two of the leading Dublin newspapers with reports of all such charges delivered on the circuit to which I was attached as a barrister. I could not write shorthand; but by recording the key words of every sentence I was able to furnish a verbatim report from memory. On the only occasion that my accuracy was ever challenged, the Judge himself confirmed it when appealed to. I found, however, that if even a few hours intervened the spell was broken, and I could not attempt more than a précis. And after the lapse of months, or even weeks, I should have hesitated to supply a précis. But here we are asked to believe that men who had no special aptitude for such a task, and who, we are told, are not always to be trusted even when they record events that occurred before their eyes, transcribed, long after they were uttered, the very words of prolonged discourses, such as the Sermon on the Mount. Was there ever a suggestion more utterly unworthy of acceptance by sensible people! Is it

not clear as light that Matthew is the real author of the Sermon on the Mount?*

But this is not all. Put the question to a mother, "If you were forced to give up one of your children, which of them would you sacrifice?" and you will never get an answer. But when you ask a Christian, "If you were forced to give up three of the Gospels, which would you retain?" the prompt and unequivocal reply is always "JOHN." To the Christian the words of the great Teacher as recorded in the fourth Gospel are more precious than all the rest. But "the author of it"—Prof. Harnack tells us—"drew up the discourses himself, and illustrated great thoughts by imaginary situations."

VI. WAS DR. HARNACK'S "JESUS" AS GREAT AS THE DISCIPLES?

This suggests a conclusion of the most startling kind. While Renan accords to his "Jesus" a position "far above His disciples," and places Him "on the highest summit of human great-

* Of course I am here arguing on Dr. Harnack's assumption that the Gospels are mere human documents and not divinely inspired. The question of inspiration is too large for discussion here. I beg to refer to my book, *The Bible and Modern Criticism*, especially chapters vii. and xiii.

ness," Prof. Harnack's "Jesus" is plainly no more than *primus inter pares*. Now here is an inexorable dilemma. If the fourth Gospel is authentic, Prof. Harnack's scheme collapses like a house of cards. If otherwise, then the fact confronts us that the "discourses" of this unknown disciple—let us call him John II.—have, throughout the whole Christian era, exercised a wider and profounder influence over the minds and hearts of men than the sayings of "Jesus" himself. It has often happened in the world's history that the real leader in a great movement has been overshadowed by someone whose personal magnetism has secured for him greater popularity.

And he is not the only claimant to pre-eminence. That the author of this Gospel, which some would call the greatest book in the world—a book, moreover, written at such a time—should not have left even a tradition of his personality or name is a supposition which tries even a trained capacity for misbelief. But his anonymity would tell against him in a plebiscite. In Paul, on the other hand, we have a man whose matchless life-story lies before us, not only in his own epis-

tles, but in the narrative of Luke. His unreserved and passionate devotion to his Master only serves to increase his hold upon our respect and admiration. Is it so clear a case then that the modern Jew is wrong in saying that Paul was the founder of Christianity? His was "the boldest enterprise," Dr. Harnack tells us; and he ventured upon it "without being able to appeal to a single word of his Master's."* Then again the claims of Peter cannot be ignored. Nor am I sure that, in the view of not a few, these popular candidates for chiefship would not be overshadowed by the tragic figure of the Baptist. At all events the question is worth looking into by the light of Prof. Harnack's scheme. And it will probably be found that the grounds on which some would veto the discussion have less weight than they suppose.

VII. BUT WAS NOT "JESUS" THE MESSIAH AND SON OF GOD?

It may be demanded, for example, "Was not Jesus the Messiah? Was it not He who preached the kingdom? Was He not the Son

* p. 179.

of God? Did He not die for men? Was it not He who brought the message of the Gospel?" Now all this may prove to be no more than an appeal to the prejudices created by traditional beliefs. Let us examine it in the clear light of the "latest scholarship" and "modern thought."

"Jesus" was the Messiah. Yes, but what does this imply? We are told that the discovery was forced on Him—how, we cannot tell—when He had "settled accounts with Himself." It was the solution of "a surging chaos of disparate feeling as well as of contradictory theory."* This "theory," moreover, was connected with "the kingdom;" and this again "Jesus took from the religious traditions of His nation."† "The idea of the two kingdoms, of God and of the devil . . . was an idea which Jesus simply shared with his contemporaries. He did not start it, but He grew up in it and He retained it."‡ No, He did not start it. It was John the Baptist who not only started it, but gave it definite form. Not that this matters much, for the whole conception springs from Jewish tradition and ignor-

*p. 135. †p. 52. ‡p. 54.

ance: "Ultimately the kingdom is nothing but the treasure which the soul possesses in the eternal and merciful God."*

Well, but "Jesus" was the Son of God. Yes, but let us not forget what we have already learned. This is merely an "idea," not a fact. As a matter of fact, He was the son of Joseph of Nazareth. In this connection "the name of Son, rightly understood, means nothing but the knowledge of God. . . . Jesus is convinced that He knows God in a way in which no one ever knew Him before."† Hence His claim to be the Son of God. But this is not "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" —we have drifted very far from such a conception as that—but merely "the God whom Jesus Christ *called* His Father, and who is also our Father."‡ It is not that He has raised us to a higher level, but that He stands beside us on the level of our common humanity. He knew God better than other men, that is all.

* p. 77. † p. 128. ‡ p. 301.

VIII. THE "MESSAGE" BROUGHT BY DR. HARNACK'S "JESUS" CONTAINED NOTHING NEW.

But, it will be urged, does not the message that He brought decide the question—"a glad message assuring us of life eternal,"* a message that brings to us "the certainty of redemption, humility, and joy in God?"† High sounding words these, but let us examine them. Dr. Harnack analyses the "message" for us. It relates to three spheres, he tells us, which in fact "coalesce." And these are "the kingdom of God, God as the Father and the infinite value of the human soul, and the higher righteousness showing itself in love."‡ But what is this "higher righteousness?" To love God and our neighbours. Surely the true Rationalist will enter a protest here. The light of nature will teach us *that*. That cold light, indeed, will neither solve the mystery of our strange incapacity to obey the law of our being, nor yet give us strength to fulfil that law. For Nature has no word of either help or pity in the case of failure, albeit its voice is clear on behalf of truth and good and right, and against

* p. 146. † p. 299. ‡ p. 77.

error and evil and wrong. And here the Christian will join with the Rationalist in his protest; for this is precisely what he means when he describes the decalogue as "the *moral* law." The fact is, that Prof. Harnack's contempt for the Old Testament and its "capricious and warlike Jehovah"* has led him to forget that this law of love was preached in the Pentateuch, and that in proclaiming it "Jesus" was avowedly quoting Moses.†

The same cause, perhaps, has blinded him to the fact that "the kingdom," as he conceives it, is taught as fully in the Old Testament as in the New. For if "the kingdom is nothing but the treasure which the soul possesses in the eternal and merciful God,"‡ the fact is indisputable that the worship of hearts that have possessed this treasure has always found its truest and fullest expression in the language of the Psalms.

* p. 76.

† The "New Commandment" was not to love a neighbour, but to love a fellow-disciple according to the standard of the Master's love.

‡ p. 77.

IX. UNIVERSAL FATHERHOOD.

There was nothing new, then, in the message in so far as it related to "the kingdom" and the "higher righteousness." But the third sphere remains. We are told that "the gospel is the knowledge and recognition of God as the Father;" and more definitely still, that God's Fatherhood is the main article in Jesus' message." That is, of course, the relationship of Father as existing between God and all mankind, for no other is recognized in Dr. Harnack's scheme. Now here a strange problem presents itself, but it concerns Prof. Harnack personally. Any one with a concordance at hand can ascertain that, unless it be the relationship between God and men in virtue of creation, the Bible knows nothing of universal Fatherhood; and further, that this relationship formed no part of the Gospel "message." Indeed there was no need for such a "message:" for men were not yet sufficiently "cultured" to know that the race had been evolved from "a primordial germ" through a nearer ancestry of "anthropoid apes." Even the heathen recognized fatherhood in that sense. The Apostle

Paul, therefore, in addressing Athenian idolaters, could appeal to it, adopting the very words of their own poets, "For we are also his offspring." And the Jew already possessed the truth of Fatherhood in a far higher sense, in connection with the covenant.

There was nothing new, therefore, in the conception of the Divine Fatherhood, any more than in that of "the kingdom" or of "the law of love." But what was characteristic in the teaching of the New Testament was that Divine grace admitted those who were in a special sense "disciples"* to a relationship which depended neither on creation nor yet on the covenant, but on a new birth by the Divine Spirit. That this sonship was strictly limited to those who were thus born again is the plain teaching of the fourth Gospel. But no more emphatic denial of the figment of universal Fatherhood in this sphere will be found in the fourth Gospel than is contained in the following words recorded in the first:—"No one knoweth the Son save the Father;

* In taking the Sermon on the Mount as addressed to the multitude, Dr. Harnack overlooks the first verse of Matt. v.

neither doth any one know the Father save the Son, *and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him.*"* The fact is that Prof Harnack studies the Bible with a mind so entirely prepossessed by what he expects and intends to find there, that he reads into the Gospels a doctrine which they expressly condemn, and fails to find what lies open on the surface.

But more than this. In addressing those who are described as "born again by the living and eternally abiding Word of God," the Apostle Peter reminds them that the God of whom he speaks is "the Father who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work." But Dr. Harnack is far too refined to offend his readers by warning them that men are sinners, and that sin calls for judgment. A cynic, surely, might suggest, therefore, that our family relationships would supply a figure more accurate and more apt than Fatherhood to describe the God of his scheme of "Christianity." He is rather like the favourite uncle who has no share in the discipline of the home, but whose kindnesses and gifts to the children,

* Matt. xi. 27.

naughty and good alike, endear him to them all!

X. "WHAT IS THERE LEFT US? MERE RATIONALISM.

And now it is high time to pause that we may consider whether anything is left to support the Nazarene's claims to transcendent homage. "What is there left us?" our author may well demand. I own I cannot see that anything is left us, unless it be the tradition of an ideal life, to serve as a pattern of all good for all time. And as we stand amid the wreck of everything on which the Christian faith has rested during all the centuries, it is impossible to keep back the fear lest that life too may prove to be nothing but a mere "idea"—the splendid dream of those noble and generous enthusiasts who imagined that the son of Joseph was the Son of God.

Of the Greek Church Prof. Harnack writes that it took the form "not of a Christian product in Greek dress, but of a Greek product in Christian dress." And of his own scheme we may aver that it is not Christianity in the foreign garb of Rationalism, but Rationalism dis-

guised in Christian language. If even a soap or soda-water manufacturer adopts a trade-mark fitted to deceive the public, the law restrains his action; but there is no tribunal to issue an injunction against misuse of the sacred title of "Christianity." And Dr. Harnack's system is not even a travesty of Christianity, it is in all essentials anti-Christian. If any should think this language unwarranted, I would justify it by the application of a clear and simple test. In the light of this German theology can we still condemn the crucifixion of the Nazarene?

XI. UNDER DR. HARNACK'S SCHEME THE CRUCIFIXION WAS JUSTIFIABLE.

We start back and shudder at the question. But may not this be due to thoughts which, if Prof. Harnack's book be true, are superstitious and erroneous. Let us be sensible and fair. Why did the Jews demand that execution? Why did Pilate authorize it? It is denied by some that the Nazarene ever claimed divine, or even kingly, homage. But the "Higher Criticism" deals only with the documents, whereas the student of evidence looks to the *facts;* and in view of the facts the denial is unworthy of

attention. Pilate seems to have been a reasonably fair and broad-minded Roman magistrate. For Jewish subtilties of creed or controversy he cared nothing. But the claim to kingship gave the Jews a weapon which they might use against Him with His imperial master. "Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." This it was that forced his hand.

According to Prof. Harnack, the prisoner might have settled the matter by explaining that His kingdom was "nothing but the treasure which the soul possesses in the eternal and merciful God." And Pilate's soldiers, instead of abusing Him, would have protected Him from violence as He passed out a free man to resume His ministry. But in framing the "accusation" for the cross—"The King of the Jews"—Pilate made plain the ground of his judgment. A claim to deity he might have dismissed as the delusion of a fanatic, for he struggled to save Him; but the royal claim raised a question which he could not safely ignore. Considering the age in which he lived and the circumstances in which he acted, does not Prof. Harnack's book take from us the

only ground on which we can with fairness censure him?

And if by the same tests we consider the conduct of the Sanhedrim we shall probably arrive at a similar result. It is the fashion to denounce these men as hypocrites or fiends. But Peter's testimony was explicit that they acted ignorantly and in good faith. And the testimony of Paul—himself a Pharisee—is that they were sincere men, and that they had "a zeal for God." The facts give proof that the Nazarene was understood to lay claim to deity. And here it may be remarked that these same facts afford strong, incidental proof of the authenticity of the fourth Gospel, for there it is chiefly that words are recorded which seem to allow of no other meaning. This, moreover, accounts for the antipathy to that Gospel displayed by critics of a certain class.

The question here, remember, is not the rejection of their Messiah by those who were the accredited custodians of that Divine revelation of which the Messiah was the substance and fulfilment. What concerns us is the rejection of Prof. Harnack's "Jesus" by the official guardians and leaders of "the Jews' religion"

—a religion that was characterized by intense jealousy for the honour of Jehovah. That "Jesus" used language which to them appeared profane is indisputable. A few frank words of disavowal would have availed to clear him of the charge; but no such words were uttered. On the contrary, He boldly accepted it.* What, then, were these men to do? They were not responsible for the brutalities committed by the soldiers or the mob; and having regard—I use the words again—to the age in which these events occurred, and to the circumstances of the time, was there anything particularly heinous in their action? Can the wickedness of the Jewish Sanhedrim in decreeing the death of "Jesus" be compared for a moment with the wickedness of the "Christian Church" when (to select a single case among unnumbered thousands) the Council of Constance committed Huss to the flames?

"What is there left us?" we may again exclaim. And from being an inquiry for discussion the words become the cry of our despair. What is there left? The Christ of God? But this, we are told, is no more than an "idea,"

* In Matt. xxvi. 63-66.

the creation of the mind of Paul. Here are Dr. Harnack's words: "Paul became the author of the speculative idea that not only was God in Christ, but that Christ himself was possessed of a peculiar nature of a heavenly kind." In a word, that Christ was something more than Joseph's son.

"The Gospel?" Yes, but not "the gospel of our salvation"—"that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." This, too, is a Pauline "idea." His was "the gospel of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." But "the gospel as Jesus proclaimed it," Dr. Harnack insists with all the emphasis of italic type, "*has to do with the Father and not with the Son.*"

And let no one suppose that the foregoing quotations give an unfair impression of the author's scheme. Here is the concluding sentence of his book. It is the summary and the climax of all that has gone before, and it has manifestly been framed with elaborate care:—

"If with a steady will we affirm the forces and the standards which on the summits of our inner life shine out as our highest good, nay, as our real self; if we are earnest and courageous enough to

accept them as the great Reality and direct our lives by them; and if we then look at the course of mankind's history, follow its upward development, and search, in strenuous and patient service for the communion of minds in it, we shall not faint in weariness and despair, but become certain of God, of the God whom Jesus Christ called His Father, and who is also our Father."

XII. DR. HARNACK'S "CHRISTIANITY" AND ANCIENT PAGANISM COMPARED.

Here, then, is the authoritative answer to the question, "What is there left us?" I have already compared the spirit of Dr. Harnack's religion with that of Renan's unbelief; let me now compare the results of that religion with the higher conceptions of ancient Paganism. Let me contrast the closing passage of Dr. Harnack's treatise on "Christianity" with the closing passage of Cicero's treatise on "Old Age." In view of the heathen doctrine of the immortality of the soul the Pagan puts from him the desire to live his life over again. He refuses, "after having run his course, to be called back from the goal to the starting-place." And he adds:—

"I retire from this world as it were from an inn, and not as if from a home, for nature has assigned it to us as an hotel for sojourn, not as a 'local habitation.' O glorious day! when I shall set out on my journey to that divine conclave and company of spirits, and when to this troubled, this polluted scene I shall bid farewell!"

The reader can judge between the Roman Paganism of 2000 years ago and the German "Christianity" of to-day. The one seems instinct with brightness and hope; the other aims no higher than to rescue us from "weariness and despair."

And can it avail even for this? What message has it for the ordinary man of the world, who, being neither a Pharisee nor a fool, is conscious that he is a sinner and needs forgiveness? And this just because he is "certain of God, the God whom Jesus Christ called His Father" the God of the Bible, "the faithful God who keepeth judgment and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments, to a thousand generations." But he has *not* loved Him, neither has he kept His commandments, but broken them.

Even if he is better than his neighbours, and

has habitually tried to please God, he is oppressed by a sense of utter failure. And if he has lived like other men, the warning of conscience is still plainer and louder. It is not "the certainty of God" that he craves, for he is intelligent enough to know that Nature is but another name for God, and that Nature is stern and pitiless in punishing. Nothing will satisfy him but the certainty of a *Saviour*. And when Prof. Harnack speaks of "the summits of his inner life" and the "upward development of mankind's history," the words only mock him. In other circumstances, perhaps they might interest and amuse him; but in view of the realities of eternity they seem to savour of mere levity. Even a Romish priest with his crucifix would be a more welcome visitor.

And his preference would be right. For the position of Romanism to-day is akin to that of Judaism in Messianic times. It has not renounced the truth, but it "holds it down in unrighteousness." The great doctrines of the Christian faith remain—the deity of Christ, redemption through His blood, the divine authority of Holy Scripture—but they are cor-

rupted and concealed by a mass of human tradition and error. Many a devout Romanist, therefore, may be acknowledged as a fellow-Christian. But infidelity absolutely separates from Christ. It is not a mere perversion of the faith; it is a denial of it. Apostate Christianity is not so hopeless as an apostasy that utterly undermines Christianity.

XIII. THESE RESULTS ARE THE OUTCOME OF THE HIGHER CRITICISM CRUSADE. ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT.

And this is the abyss in which Dr. Harnack's teaching would engulf us. And the road which leads to it is the Higher Criticism. Not so, it will perhaps be said, with our English critics. But the explanation of this is simple. As a nation we are not as logical as the Germans, and most of our English critics still feel the power of truth which every free and fearless thinker recognises to be inconsistent with the principles and conclusions of the Higher Criticism.

But here we must distinguish. The system of Bible study for which Eichhorn coined that title is ostensibly an examination of the sacred

books with a view to analyzing their contents and ascertaining their date and authorship. Such a study is altogether useful and admirable. And if its legitimate results have disturbed certain "orthodox" traditions, the Bible is the gainer, and the true Bible lover welcomes the light thus thrown upon the sacred page. But Eichhorn had in view also a crusade which has no necessary connection whatever with the Higher Criticism as thus defined. He and his fellow-workers set themselves to win back the cultured classes of Germany to Christianity by eliminating from the Bible every element to which the Rationalists took exception. And the Higher Criticism was promptly "captured" by this sceptical propagandism, and it has never shaken off its sinister influence. The movement, therefore, which has ever since flown that flag is essentially a sceptical crusade against the Bible. I do not aver that all critical scholars have any such animus or aim. Not even in Germany is this true of them, and much less in England. Many of them, indeed, are careful to separate themselves in this respect from the more advanced of the critics. But they all give proof that they feel the force

of the current which sets against the Bible; and when they use language of apology or reserve it is generally in their defense of Holy Scripture, and not in pressing their criticisms to its prejudice.

Now here several considerations will suggest themselves to the thoughtful. The word "critic" has a double meaning. It may mean a hostile examiner or fault-finder, or it may mean a judge. And the proper function of the critic in the former sense is to supply materials upon which the critic in the higher and truer sense may adjudicate. For every decision of criticism involves a judicial inquiry, and experience abundantly proves that an expert seldom possesses the qualifications necessary for inquiries of this kind. This is true even in the legal profession. For it is notorious that the best lawyer often makes the worst Judge. How much more true then must it be in other spheres. While, therefore, it is not pretended that a knowledge of Hebrew unfits a man for deciding the questions with which the Higher Criticism deals, it is certain that it gives no proof of fitness for such a task. For the most eminent Hebrew scholar in Christendom may

be singularly wanting in the qualities essential in a judge. Indeed, he may have less broad-mindedness and common sense than an average schoolboy.

XIV. THE HIGHER CRITICISM DISTINGUISHED FROM THE DICTA OF THE "HIGHER CRITICS."

We must always distinguish, therefore, between the decisions of the Higher Criticism and the dicta of those who claim to be its exponents. If the authorship of a book were the subject-matter of a criminal charge or of a civil action, the decision of the case would not be left to philological experts, at least, not in any civilized country. But in these matters of supreme importance a thoughtless public is browbeaten or cajoled into accepting the experts as a final court of appeal. "Nothing, indeed, is more astonishing to me" (says Prof. von Orelli of Basel) "than the readiness with which even diligent explorers in this field (of Old Testament criticism) attach themselves to the dominant theory, and repeat the most rash hypotheses, as if they were part of an unquestioned creed." Referring to "the ordeal of the Englishman's strong and strict sense for fact,"

Matthew Arnold writes: "We are much mistaken if it does not turn out that this ordeal makes great havoc among the vigorous and rigorous theories of German criticism concerning the Bible-documents." And in this connection the following extract from Prof. Sayce's *Higher Criticism and the Monuments** is still more apt and weighty:—

"The arrogancy of tone adopted at times by the 'higher criticism' has been productive of nothing but mischief; it has aroused distrust even of its most certain results, and has betrayed the critic into a dogmatism as unwarranted as it is unscientific. Baseless assumptions have been placed on a level with ascertained facts, hasty conclusions have been put forward as principles of science, and we have been called upon to accept the prepossessions and fancies of the individual critic as the revelation of a new gospel. If the archæologist ventured to suggest that the facts he had discovered did not support the views of the critic, he was told that he was no philologist. The opinion of a modern German theologian was worth more, at all events in the eyes of his 'school,' than the most positive testimony of the monuments of antiquity."

These cautions must not be forgotten when

* p. 5.

we are told that "modern scholarship" has decided this or that respecting the Bible. Nor is this all. When we speak of the decisions of "the Church" we mean that a definite company of men, formally convened like any other corporation, have discussed and voted upon certain subjects. Dr. Harnack, indeed, has done good service in showing how little weight is due to the decisions of Church Councils,* but that does not affect the question here. If, on the other hand, we speak of the decisions of scholarship, we are using language in a loose and figurative sense. When, for example, someone says that scholarship has decided that the books of the Pentateuch were not written in the Mosaic age, he means either that all competent scholars have come to this conclusion, or else that some impersonation called "scholarship," distinct from the united voice of scholars, has decreed it. But the one al-

* I refer to his chapters on the Greek and Roman churches. Were it not for his laboured efforts to prove that the doctrine of the Deity of Christ was a product of Greek thought, and that the *truth* of the *logos*, as well as the word, was of Greek origin, these chapters might lead us to forget that the writer was not a believer.

ternative would be utterly untrue, and the other is absolutely unmeaning.

XV. THE PENTATEUCH CONTROVERSY AS ILLUSTRATING THE METHODS OF THE CRITICS.

The Pentateuch controversy is so typical of the methods of the critics that it may justify a digression. It formerly seemed an anachronism to hold that books of such literary excellence could have been written in the Mosaic age; hence the theory that they belonged to the exilic period. But recent discoveries have shown that this decision was based on ignorance. The spade of the explorer has dug up proofs that literature flourished long before the time of Moses. The critics, however, are indifferent to all such discoveries. Having made up their minds to discredit the Pentateuch, they now look about for other grounds to support their case. To this end the following verse in Jeremiah is pressed into service: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices" (vii. 22). But this merely recites a fact which is as plainly recorded on the

open page of the Book of Exodus as is the exodus itself. The ritual of the law had nothing to do with Israel's redemption; it was given to a people already redeemed and brought into covenant relationship with God.

The spiritual Christian sees a deep significance in this; but the fact is patent to any intelligent reader. Here was the announcement entrusted to Moses at the exodus: *"If ye will obey My voice* indeed, and keep My covenant . . . ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. *These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."** And in the passage already cited Jeremiah was merely quoting this. Here are his words: "I spake not unto your fathers . . . concerning burnt offerings or sacrifices: but this thing commanded I them, saying, *Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people."*† The critics' use of the prophet's language, therefore, is wholly unwarranted. In fact, it is a mere blunder.

Another of the isolated texts relied on by the critics is Exodus vi. 3, which they distort into a statement that the name Jehovah was not

* Exodus xix. 5, 6. † Jeremiah vii. 22, 23.

known to the patriarchs.* But this argument refutes itself; for if the Book of Exodus be a literary forgery, it is certain that the brilliant author of it would not have given himself away like this.

The critics would have us believe that the patriarchs were polytheists, and that four centuries were needed to teach the nation the truth that God is One. The lesson was learned only in the twelfth generation. This preposterous and profane theory is refuted by the experience of Christian missions in every heathen land. Many of us met King Lewanika, of Barotsiland, during his recent visit to England, and we know him to be a worshipper of the Christians' God. And the gentleman under whose care Lewanika's son is living in England bears unequivocal testimony that the lad is an intelligent and earnest Christian. And yet I have heard from Captain Bertrand, the distinguished Swiss explorer, that a few years ago Lewanika was a naked savage, who with his own hand murdered his rival chiefs, and that

* The critics refute each other. Prof. Delitzsch finds Yahwè in an inscription of the time of Hammurabi (*Babel and Bible.*)

his drunken orgies at every new moon were marked by unspeakable excesses. Pastor Coillard, the French missionary, thus achieved in a few short years what God Almighty needed four centuries to accomplish!

The revelation of Jehovah at the exodus is like the revelation of the Father by the Lord Jesus Christ. Dr. Harnack's "Jesus" *discovered* the Father; the Lord Jesus Christ *revealed* the Father. But it is only the spiritual Christian who knows the Father in the true and deeper sense. In the sad story of Mazzini's life there are no sadder words than these: "I feel God's power and law more every day, but He cannot weep with me or fill my soul's void; for I am a man still and tied to earth." But this was because Mazzini was (to use Dr. Harnack's phrase) "certain of God," and yet ignorant of Christ. For the Christian, albeit "a man still and tied to earth," knows a God in Christ who can weep with him and fill his soul's void; in a word, he knows *the Father*. "Superior persons," I suppose, would call this *anthropomorphism*. But as they do not apply the term to their own theory of the Fatherhood of God, the Christian need not be scared by it.

XVI. MOSES AND HAMMURABI.

Reference has already been made to the latest discovery of the critics. But yesterday Genesis xiv. was rejected as unhistorical. Amraphel was dismissed as a myth, just as Nebuchadnezzar used to be. The article about him in Smith's *Bible Dictionary* is merely a few lines to say that explorations in Babylonia might probably bring something to light about him. Dr. Pinches it was who expressed that hope. The frontispiece to his last book is a portrait of Amraphel; for to-day Amraphel (or Hammurabi) stands out as one of the great figures of the past, and his code of laws excites our admiration. But what use do the critics make of the discovery? Instead of acknowledging the ignorance and folly of the grounds on which they formerly rejected the Mosaic code, they now proclaim that that code is merely an adaptation of Amraphel's.

But this only displays their animus against the Bible, and their incapacity to deal with questions of evidence. Every pastoral people with any claim to be civilized would have laws such as are common to both codes. But if

the question be raised whether the one was derived from the other, the true critic—the expert in evidence—will ask whether the *penalties* are the same. As a matter of fact there is no kinship between the two codes in any of the incidental points by which the student of evidence would decide the question. We all wash our faces; and so did King Amraphel; but our practice in this respect is not based on his.

Nor is this all. Error is in its very nature absurd, and this Hammurabi theory exemplifies the fact. Blinded by their fixed determination to disparage the Pentateuch, the critics have here sprung a mine which blows their Pentateuchal theories into the air. It is not credible that Moses was ignorant of the legal codes in operation in other nations than Egypt, and no one who has studied the human element in divine revelation would be surprised to find proofs of this in "the Mosaic code." But what then becomes of the theory that the books of Moses were written in the era of the exile? Eliminate all element of divine authorship, as the critics do, and the inference is obvious that a code of laws for the young nation of

the exodus would be based upon the best existing code then available. But to suppose that the author of the critic's Pentateuch, writing in Palestine some fourteen centuries later, would take the Hammurabi code as his model, is a theory too wild for discussion. Every proof the critics can offer that the Jewish code was based on the Babylonian code goes to support the view that the Jewish code was framed in the Mosaic age.

The critical hypothesis, moreover, is sufficiently refuted by the single fact that the Pentateuch was *the Bible* of the Samaritans. That purely *Jewish* books, and Jewish books of a time long after the captivity of the ten tribes, would have been singled out for such unique and unbounded reverence by a people who hated everything Jewish, is a figment unworthy of discussion. Its acceptance by the critics proves their unfitness to deal with any question of the kind.

XVII. THE THEORIES OF THE CRITICS VIOLATE TRUE CRITICISM. ANALOGY OF THE DREYFUS CASE.

But, we shall be told, the grounds on which scholars assign the Mosaic books to the sixth century B. C. are the result of a critical examination of the text. The statement is absolutely unwarranted and untrue. In placing "Moses" after "the prophets," the critics not only dislocate the whole scheme of Biblical revelation—Old and New Testament alike—and ignore the plain teaching of our divine Lord, but they flagrantly violate their own much-vaunted methods of criticism. If they applied those methods to the examination of the Pentateuch they would find abundant proof that the books were written in the very circumstances in which they profess to have been written.*

As already urged, we must distinguish be-

* To enlarge on this here is, of course, impossible. But overwhelming proof of my statement will be found in the pages of *Lex Mosaica*, from the first article by Prof. Sayce to the last by Dr. Wace, Dean of Canterbury. As I write, another book, equally convincing and much more accessible, has been published in an English translation by the Religious Tract Society, *Are the*

tween true criticism and the dicta of those who claim to be Higher Critics. The work of the German Higher Critics and their English disciples has the same relation to the principles of criticism that the Dreyfus trial in France had to the principles of justice. The judges decided the case and then proceeded to try it. The object of the trial was not to investigate the charge, but to convict the accused. And so here. Having made up their minds on grounds now proved to be untenable that the Mosaic books are forgeries, the critics set themselves to establish this conclusion. And to attain this end they violate the first principles of criticism; they ignore everything urged on the other side by scholars as able as themselves; and, as in the Dreyfus trial, nothing is too trivial for use if only it can be made to support their case.

In a court of *justice* every doubtful point is construed in favour of the accused. But with

Critics Right? by Wilhelm Moller (who was at one time "immovably convinced of the irrefutable correctness of the Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis"), with an introduction by Prof. von Orelli, D. D. And by all means see Canon Girdlestone's *Hebrew Criticism.* ("Twentieth Century Papers," John F. Shaw & Co., 48 Paternoster Row, London.)

the critics, as in the Dreyfus trial, the opposite principle prevails. It has been well stated that "the idea of a written revelation may be said to be logically involved in the notion of a living God."* And if this be so, it is certain that the world cannot have been left without a revelation during the thousands of years before the Mosaic age. But the critics show grounds for supposing that several documents were used in compiling the Book of Genesis. And the inference is legitimate that these were the records of earlier revelations. Archæology, however, has brought to light old-world pagan records, which contain, in the midst of much that is grotesque and silly, traditions akin to those of Genesis. The critical scholar maintains that the wild and silly version is the original. Old-fashioned orthodoxy insists that Genesis is the original. The true critic—the judicial expert—asserts his right to adjudicate in the matter, and his knowledge of human nature and of the prinicples of evidence leads him to decide that both the Mosaic records and the pagan inscriptions are derived from the same original, and that the Mosaic records,

* Principal Fairbairn, of Mansfield College, Oxford.

being (in contrast with the inscriptions) coherent and simple and pure, are the authentic version of that original.

Prof. Delitzsch's *Babel and Bible* supplies striking evidence to confirm this conclusion, and at the same time it illustrates in a no less striking manner the writer's incapacity to reason from the facts which he advances. If I suspect an agent of betraying my confidence by repeating what I communicate to him, I may test him by telling him something which I invent for the purpose. The publication of any part of my story is proof of his dishonesty. But not so if I tell him *facts;* for those facts, being known to others, may have been imparted by others. And so here. If, for example, there was no creation and no deluge, Prof. Delitzsch's argument is sound. But not otherwise. His inference as to the sabbath is a notable instance of this. "But" (he writes) "since the Babylonians also had a sabbath day . . . *it is scarcely possible for us to doubt* that we owe the blessings decreed in the sabbath or Sunday rest" to Babylon. Does the Professor deny that the weekly day of rest is a divine

institution? And if he does not deny this his argument is absolutely puerile.

He sinks to a still lower level when he refers the Biblical teaching about angels to the fact that 'a Babylonian ruler required an army of messengers to carry his commands into every land." And in this slough of pretentious folly he probably "touches bottom" when he connects our Lord's use of spittle in certain of His miracles with the words of the pagan prayer, "O Marduk! to thee belongs the spittle of life." And the amazing part of it is that anyone should take all this as discrediting the Bible. It discredits only the lecturer. It shows him to be a notable specimen of a not uncommon type of university "don"; a man of great erudition and culture, but wholly wanting in common sense and a capacity for reasoning. "Babel" is his hobby, and he is "riding it to death."

XVIII. BABYLON REPRESENTED THE APOSTASY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD.

The fact is that Babylon had far more influence over men, and specially over Israel, than even Prof. Delitzsch supposes. It was to

the ancient world what Papal Rome has been to Christendom. There is not a truth of Christianity which is not travestied by Rome; there was no truth of the primeval revelations that was not travestied by Babylon. Therefore it is that Babylon was so abhorrent to God and to His people; therefore it is that in the Apocalypse the name is connected with the Christian apostasy. The ordinances of the Hebrew cult were not, as the German Rationalists suppose, picked out of that old-world dirt-heap; they were the repromulgation of divine truths which Babylon had perverted and degraded. What wonder is it if the false bore resemblance to the true!

And this leads me to repeat with emphasis that the main question here at issue is not the truth of traditional beliefs or of so-called "orthodox" interpretations of Scripture. For these I care but little; and this being so, I have no fear of criticism of the Bible, however searching, if only it be fair and intelligent and true. But while we hear *ad nauseam* of the "decisions" of criticism, it is not too much to say that as yet the tribunal has not even been constituted which could claim to adjudicate

upon the Scriptures in the name of criticism. We demand a fair tribunal, whereas the critics have entered on the inquiry with a prejudice. We demand a competent tribunal, whereas at every step the critics give proof that they are lacking in the primary qualification of practical acquaintance with the science of evidence. And on the accepted principle of trial by one's peers we demand also a *Christian* tribunal, a tribunal, that is, which recognises the deity of Christ, and will accept His authority as a teacher. For nothing short of this has any right to the name of "Christian."

XIX. WHAT THEN IS CHRISTIANITY? THE MATERIALS FOR THE TRUE INQUIRY.

To return to Dr. Harnack's book; his "Christianity" is merely the highest expression of natural religion. Had he lived in the first century he would have taught the Jew that there was no "offense," and the Greek that there was no "foolishness" in the cross. His book would have taken Athens and Jerusalem by storm. But to call this *Christianity* is a sheer abuse of language; for Christianity is, in contrast with natural religion, a divine

revelation. What, then, is that revelation? Destructive criticism of this book only clears the ground for consideration of the question, "What is Christianity?" For the answer which Dr. Harnack supplies is not only inadequate, but false.

And we must begin by rejecting much that he includes, and by insisting on much that he rejects. The question is to be answered in the light of the Bible as a whole, and not of capriciously selected fragments of the New Testament. And the inquiry must not be prejudiced by reference to the history of Christendom. For "the Christian religion" bears the same relation to the New Testament that "the Jew's religion" bears to the Old: it is a human system based on a divine revelation. What concerns us here is the character and scope of that revelation.

XX. THE OLD TESTAMENT IS ACCREDITED BY CHRIST.

And let the fact be kept plainly in view that our acceptance of the Old Testament as a divine revelation is based upon the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. "The fact," I say,

because it is not disputed that He so regarded the Hebrew Scriptures. This is admitted by the Higher Critics, but they put forward their *kenosis* theories in order to evade the force of the admission. Such theories, however, are but dust thrown in the eyes of the thoughtless. For they ignore the fact that the Lord's plainest teaching on this subject was not during the ministry of the humiliation at all, but after His resurrection, when He spoke in all the fulness of divine knowledge. "Beginning from Moses" (we read) "and from all the prophets, He interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." And again: "He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures."

XXI. CHRIST IS DISCREDITED BY THE CRITICS.

"The law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms" was the well-known division of the Jewish Scriptures—the Old Testament as we have it in our English Bible to-day, not one chapter more or less. "These are My words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you." He thus adopted and confirmed all His previous teaching respecting Holy Scripture. And He sent out His apostles to communicate that teaching to others. But the Higher Critics would have us believe that instead of "opening their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures," He deluded them into misunderstanding the Scriptures, with the result that Church and world were kept in ignorance and error on the subject for eighteen centuries, until the German Rationalists exposed the fraud!

Some of the critics, indeed, would offer us an alternative here. They hold that the Lord had fuller knowledge than His contemporaries, but that on grounds of expediency and policy He adapted His teaching to prevailing prejudices and ignorance. As a blunt man of the world

would say, He was not a blind Jew, but only an opportunist. And if a disciple of Tom Paine should seize upon these statements as implying that the Founder of Christianity was admittedly either a fool or a knave, the only objection which the critics could make would be to the gross coarseness of the language. Surely we may be pardoned for refusing to discuss a position, the mere statement of which savours of profanity.

Not that the critics see anything profane in it. But this may be due to the fact that their point of view differs from that of the ordinary Christian. They are not thinking of the living Lord, before whom they must stand in judgment, but of "a man of the name of Jesus Christ," the dead Buddha, who is a fit subject for *post mortem* inquiries of this kind.

Let it be kept clearly in view, then, that it is upon the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ that we accept the Old Testament Scriptures. I avail myself of words borrowed from Dean Alford's Commentary to mark the significance of the closing passage of Luke, quoted above:—

"The whole Scriptures are a testimony to Him: the whole history of the chosen people, with its types, and its law, and its prophecies, is a *shewing forth of Him:* and it was here the *whole* that He laid out before them. . . Observe the testimony which the verse gives to the divine authority, and the Christian interpretation of the Old Testament Scriptures: so that the denial of the references to Christ's death and glory in the Old Testament is henceforth *nothing less than a denial of His own teaching."*

XXII. DR. HARNACK'S MISCONCEPTIONS AND THE CAUSE OF THEM.

At this point, therefore, the ways divide, and we part company with the sceptics altogether. For we receive the Old Testament, not by the grace of the critics, but upon the authority of our Divine Lord speaking with all the fulness of divine wisdom and knowledge. And this being so, we study His ministry and mission in the light of the Hebrew Scriptures. From Him we have learned to read them as "testifying of *Him*," as containing "the things concerning *Him*." This is their esoteric teaching, deep down beneath the level at which the critics ply their tools. He came not to destroy "the law," but to fulfil it; not, as Dr. Har-

nack supposes, to deliver men from belief in the Jehovah of the Old Testament, but to confirm all that God had therein declared and promised in the past.

Years ago we were amused by a book about England and the English from the pen of a distinguished Oriental who had lately visited this country. The writer was a shrewd observer, full of good nature, and ready to take a kindly view of us and of our ways. But as, of course, he looked at everything from outside, his misapprehensions and mistakes were many. So it is with Dr. Harnack's book. He has studied Christianity from the outside. His "Jesus" is only a sort of high-class Gautama, whose great and noble mind and heart struggled toward the light in the midst of prevailing ignorance and error, begotten of Old Testament teaching and a narrow provincial environment.

XXIII. THE "PTOLEMAIC SYSTEM" OF BIBLE STUDY.

Nor is it only in the sphere of what is called "spiritual truth" that these misconceptions appear; they are equally manifest in the lectures

on the Lord's teaching relative to social order and public law. And naturally so. Suppose we had to-day a number of highly cultured "men of science" who ignored "the law of gravitation" and adhered to the Ptolemaic system of astronomy, the irreconcilable differences between such observers and our astronomers of the modern school would obviously depend on their regarding phenomena common to both from wholly different points of view. For to anyone who insists on viewing the heavenly bodies from his own standpoint, it is certain that sun and moon and stars are moving round the earth, and it is equally certain that the earth on which he stands is at rest.

This suggestion may seem grotesque, but it fairly illustrates what Christians in general regard as the root error of the sceptics respecting the Bible. The astronomer knows that the sun, and not the planet on which we live is the centre of our system; and he tells us that our whole solar system is but a part of a system incomparably vaster and greater. The Christian interpretation of the Holy Scriptures centres in Christ, and the entire

scheme of revelation and redemption is but a part of an infinitely greater system revolving round, and leading up to, God Himself.

If a Ptolemaic school of astronomers existed to-day, there would doubtless be among them men who would denounce the absurdity of supposing that the earth was flying through space and whirling round like a teetotum, and they would deem it but a trial of temper and a waste of time to argue with anyone who held such a belief. But there would be also among them men of more liberal minds, perpared to discuss the question; and no method of discussion would be more natural or useful than that of asking them to accept for the sake of argument the views they rejected, and to consider the matter on that basis. And so here; all who hold what was formerly regarded as the Christian estimate of the Bible are regarded by the baser sort of sceptic as wanting in either brains or honesty. But from men of a different spirit we can confidently expect a fair hearing; and I proceed to discuss the matter on the assumption that Christianity is true—Christianity, I mean, in the old acceptation of the word.

In what follows, therefore, I will assume that "the Nazarene" was the Son of God—not in the critics' sense, but in the Biblical sense—the only begotten Son of God; and that the Hebrew Scriptures are what He represented them to be. And this assumption will at once lead us to look for a meaning in much that otherwise we should pass by unnoticed, and to review our judgment about many things of obvious importance.

The special subject which suggested these last remarks may serve to illustrate this; I mean public law. "The law of Moses" included three branches, which are clearly distinguishable: First, "The moral law," as it has come to be called; Second, The code for the government of the Jewish theocracy; and Third, What the critics call "the priestly code." It is the second of these which concerns us here. It is the fashion to denounce it as being savagely cruel and the doom of the sabbath-breaker in Numbers xv., is cited as establishing the truth of the charge. Let us look into this.

I will not speak here of the spiritual meaning of the sabbath as a type of "better things"

to come. The creation rest was based upon a finished work, and wilfully to break that rest was "to die without mercy." The great redemption rest of the new creation is based upon the finished work of Christ, and a "sorer punishment" awaits those who slight it, or the work on which it is based, by turning to works or efforts of their own. But here I will deal with the Jewish law on its human side as a code for the government of the Jewish commonwealth.

A unique characteristic of that law (I am not aware of any other code which contains it) was the distinction between ordinary offences and what are called *presumptuous*, or, as the Revisers render it, "high-handed" acts. An offender was held to have acted thus when there was a total absence of provocation or temptation. And the case of the sabbath-breaker is cited as an instance of this. Even in the case of a homicide there were special provisions in the interests of mercy; but here was conduct such as cuts at the root of all authority and makes civil society impossible. The Bible has this in common with other books, that it demands ordinary intelligence

on the part of the reader. And here the facts as stated enable us to fill in the circumstances. It was not a case of thoughtlessness or ignorance. Sins of ignorance were fully provided for in the code; in this respect, indeed, no modern code of laws is equally merciful. And since the world began, no one was ever driven by overpowering impulse to rush out to gather firewood. The man was a typical anarchist who deliberately set himself to try conclusions with the State. Having declared himself an outlaw he was treated as an outlaw. So far from this being a blot upon Jewish law, the absence of a similar provision in English law is a grave defect. In the judgment of that eminent jurist, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, if cases of this type were similarly dealt with in England, "really bad offenders would soon become as rare as wolves."*

* Sir James Stephen's discussion of the principles which should govern punishment, in his *History of the Criminal Law of England,* is impliedly a signal vindication of the Mosaic code; impliedly, I say, because it has no reference to the Bible, and the writer had no belief in the Bible. In the pages of *the Nineteenth Century* during the last two years I have shown how faulty our English law is in this very respect.

XXIV. THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT: ITS SCOPE AND PURPOSE.

But, it will be said, the Sermon on the Mount abrogates the Mosaic law both in the letter and the spirit of it. So far is this from the truth that it gives a wholly new sanction to the Mosaic law.* The objection, moreover, is based on a total misconception of the scope and aim of the Sermon on the Mount. It is not intended, as the objector supposes, to unfold a system of *government.* Under such a code, indeed, all governent would be impossible. It is teaching for the guidance of *the disciples;* primarily for the time when He was with them, and ultimately for the era of "the kingdom of the heavens," when righteousness will prevail, and divine principles of government will be openly enforced by divine power on earth.

Of course, I do not expect the reader to believe that such a state of things will ever be realised. But let him not forget our compact, that I am to be allowed, for the sake of argument, to assume that Christ is divine and the Bible true. And there is no doubt as to what

* Matthew v. 17-19.

Christ taught and the Bible says on this subject. Most people seem to regard it as a matter of course that God should remain passive amidst the activities of evil and wrong and cruelty on earth. But Scripture leads us to regard such a state of things as altogether abnormal. And the infidel accepts it as proof that the God of the Bible is a myth. Nor is this peculiar to this age, in which God is silent in a special sense. "Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God?" was the cry of the psalmist.* And again: "As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?"† "The mystery of God" is not that He shall yet make His presence and power felt in the government of the world, but that He delays to do this. But the time is coming when "the mystery of God shall be finished;" when, in the sublime language of the Apocalypse, "the sovereignty of the world shall become our Lord's and His Christ's, and He shall reign."

He rules by delegation now. For "there is no power but of God." The police officer and the criminal judge are as really "ministers of

* Psalm xxix. 10. † Psalm xlii. 10.

God" as is the preacher of the gospel.* His is the ministry of grace, their's the ministry of law. And the two spheres are distinct. The principles of divine government are not abrogated by the proclamation of grace in the gospel. The union of the two ministries in the same individual may give rise to difficulties; and even the ordinary Christian may at times be in doubt whether, for example, he ought to forgive an offender or to prosecute him. If the wrong done has relation to the fact of his being a Christian, he will probably act in grace. But, in all ordinary circumstances his course is simple; "the powers that be are ordained of God," and he will hand over the offender to be dealt with by those powers.

The case of the tribute money may seem to conflict with this principle,† but not when rightly understood. The question there put by the Jews was not the statement of an honest difficulty, but a mere trick, intended to bring the Lord into conflict with the Roman authorities. And so He took them on their own ground, and left them entangled in the very net they sought to spread for Him. If there

*See Rom. xiii. 5. †Harnack, pp. 104, 105.

was, indeed, the conflict they supposed between God and government, their question answered itself. "Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?" He indignantly exclaimed. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.*

A similar instance is supplied by the case of the adulteress taken in the act.† The law decreed her death; what was His decision? Would He stand by the law, or (as His enemies would say) throw off the mask, and take sides with the transgressor and against the law? Here again, with matchless wisdom, He refused the snare they laid for Him. The law, He declared, was right, and must be vindicated. But by whom was the sentence to be executed? The woman should be stoned; but let him that was without sin among them cast the first stone.

But the question will be pressed, perhaps, Are not the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount binding upon us? Let me answer this by a test case: "Give to him that asketh

* Matthew xxii. 16-21. The case dealt with in xvii. 24-27 was wholly different, the tribute there being the usual contribution to the temple.

†John viii.

thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."* If Christians in London were to act thus they would soon gravitate to the poorhouse, and during the process they would be social pests. But under the divine law there was short shrift for "the glutton and the drunkard," and all who refused to work were left to starve. Idle tramps and professional beggars would be impossible under such a system, and the very fact of poverty or need would *primâ facie* be a claim for pity and help.

The precept, therefore, must be taken in its proper setting. It is not a reversal of the Mosaic law, but a corollary upon that law adequately and justly administered. The principle which underlies it has, of course, its lesson for us, for principles are eternal. But that is not the question here. Many divine commands were given to meet temporary circumstances; but, being based on a principle, they have a lesson for us. "Thou shalt not mar the corners of thy beard,"† for example, embodies a principle that is as much needed by Christians to-

* Harnack, p. 97.

† Leviticus xix. 27; cf. Jeremiah ix. 26, R. V.

day as any commandment in the Decalogue. It was because the heathen trimmed their hair in this fashion in honour of their gods that the practice was forbidden. Though perfectly harmless in itself, it might become a snare to the Israelite and an encouragement to the idolater. But Christians nowadays seem to delight in copying the practices of those whose principles they profess to abhor.

XXV. THE LORD'S PRESENCE ON EARTH CALLED FOR SPECIAL PRECEPTS.

In this connection an element claims notice which, obvious and important though it be, is too generally ignored. The presence of the Son of God on earth, and the character of His mission, affected not only the ministry of His disciples, but their conduct generally, and called for special precepts for their guidance. And some of these were afterwards abrogated, either by implication or in express terms. A single example of this may suffice. When the Lord first sent out the disciples, He vetoed even the most ordinary provision for a journey. "Carry neither purse nor scrip nor shoes," was

His command.* But in view of His leaving them all this was changed. "When I sent you without purse or scrip or shoes [He asked of them] lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one. For [He added] the things [written in the Scriptures] concerning Me have an end."†

The mention of the sword is specially significant. Even to us Westerns the figurativeness of the language is obvious, and yet Peter, Oriental though he was, misunderstood it and took it literally. Now that the Lord was about to leave them they were to resume the position of citizens.‡ But in a civilised community the citizen is not left to defend himself. That is the duty of the State. The sword is entrusted to the constituted authorities, to be "a terror to evil-doers" and a protection to the

* Luke x. 4. † Luke xxi. 35-37.

‡ These precepts, like those of the Sermon on the Mount, were not for the apostles as such, but for the disciples generally. In Luke x. the seventy were expressly addressed. The *apostles* were recommissioned after the resurrection.

law-abiding. The Lord's words must not be perverted to justify the Christian's "taking the law into his own hands." But they ought to satisfy even the most sensitive conscience that there is nothing un-Christian in appealing for protection to the civil power.

XXVI. LAW AND GOSPEL EQUALLY DIVINE.

Under Dr. Harnack's system all this is either perverted or ignored. He gives a qualified approval to the pestilent theories of Tolstoi, and states the opposite contention "that the gospel takes law and legal relations under its protection."* But this alternative view is not only inaccurate but absurd, for law and gospel are equally divine. True it is that the law which is commonly administered in human courts bears about the same relation to the divine standard as does the gospel which is commonly preached in human pulpits. But this does not affect the principle. And here the Christian's duty is plain. If human law enjoins that which distinctly clashes with the divine, he disobeys, and takes the consequences. But short of this, he obeys, recognising that "the

* pp. 107, 108.

powers that be are ordained of God." "There is no power but of God"; and, therefore, the infliction of injustice or wrong under human law is not a usurpation of divine authority, but an abuse of it. The practical application of this principle is clear and simple. The householder, for example, will pay his "tribute," even though the money be used to subsidise and promote the teaching and practice of idolatry. And this, whether the "Cæsar" be a pagan Nero, or a constitutional government in a Christian country. But if the "Cæsar" required the Christian to take part in the practice of idolatry, or to subject his children to the teaching of it, then a higher law would take precedence of the human law, and he would refuse obedience.

XXVII. THE LORD'S MESSIANIC MISSION AND THE SCOPE OF THE GOSPELS.

But to resume; for all this is, in a sense, a digression, albeit a necessary one. The Lord's Messianic mission had a twofold character. He came "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers"—the covenant people; "and [the apostle adds] that the Gentiles [who had

neither covenant nor promises] might glorify God for His *mercy.*"* But first, He was "a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God." Under Professor Harnack's "Ptolemaic system" of exegesis this was "the husk"—the outcome of Jewish prejudice and provincial ignorance.† But we have learned to read the Bible differently. The Jew claimed a monopoly of divine favour, but the divine concession granted him was wholly different. "In commerce there are two well-known systems on which merchants deal with the public. The one is to sell directly to everyone who wishes to become a customer; the other is to deal only through an agent. When the owner of some famous French vineyard, for instance, appoints an English agent, and refuses to supply his wine except through that agent, his object is to make it easier for the English public to obtain supplies, and to insure them against adulteration and fraud. And God's purpose for Israel was that that favoured na-

* Romans xv. 8, 9.

† The historian's task of distinguishing between what is traditional and what is peculiar, between the kernel and the husk, in Jesus' message is a difficult one" (Harnack, p. 55).

tion should be His agents upon earth. Jerusalem was to be 'the place of His name.' "*

Hence the words, "He came to His own." And in the first two Gospels—Matthews especially—we have the record of that phase of His ministry. The truth of grace—the great characteristic truth of Christianity—will be sought there in vain. The very word "grace" cannot be found in them. In the third Gospel, written for a Gentile, that truth is foreshadowed; but it is not till we read the fourth that the full revelation of it bursts upon us. The *distinctive* doctrines of Christianity are not to be found in the teaching of the "Synoptics," as they are called. The first two Gospels, indeed, belong as much to the Old Testament as to the New. They are the winding up of the Old and the beginning of the New. The synoptical Gospels are divinely described as the records of what Christ "*began* to do and to teach"; of what "*began* to be spoken by the Lord." And His voice like that of Moses and the prophets, then "spake on earth." But to us He "speaketh from heaven." The full revelation of Christianity has come to us from the throne of God—

* *The Bible and Modern Criticism*, p. 159.

from our ascended and glorified Lord speaking through His inspired apostles and prophets of the New Testament.

If men would but bring their intelligence to bear on the subject, they would see that the truth of this is clear on the open page of Scripture. The Old Testament spoke, indeed, of "mercy" for Gentiles—crumbs from the children's table—but this fell very far short of the glorious revelation of grace; grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life, and divine love to a lost world. During the reign of covenant and promise grace could have no scope. It was not till covenants and promises had been broken and forfeited by the murder of the Son of God that grace in its fulness could be revealed. Even the gospel of the Ministry was " a gospel which in its main particulars had yet to be fulfilled, and which could not be fully opened till it had been fulfilled."* "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel" is not, as Dr. Harnack would tell us, "the husk" of prejudice; it expresses the dispensational limits of the Lord's special

* Cannon Bernard's *Bampton Lectures*, 1864; which see, by all means, on the question here at issue.

Messianic mission. "I have a baptism to be baptised with" (He exclaimed), "and how am I straitened till it is accomplished?" Grace was there, for "grace came by Jesus Christ;" but it was restrained—restrained until the cross of Calvary broke down every barrier by cancelling every covenant and promise that bound Him to the race.

XXVIII. THE CROSS, THE GREAT CRISIS OF THE WORLD'S HISTORY.

The Son of God has died by the hands of men. Every claim which man had upon God has thus been forfeited. Promises there were, and covenants, but Christ was to be the Fulfiller of them all. He laid aside His glory and came down to earth. At His own door He stood and knocked, but it was shut in His face.* Turning thence He wandered into the world—the world that He Himself had made—but wandered there an outcast. "His own received Him not;" "the world knew Him not." In return for pity He earned but scorn and hate. Sowing kindness with a lavish hand,

* John i. 11. The French idiom here is nearer to the Greek than the English: "Il est venu chez soi, et les siens ne l'ont point reçu."

He reaped but cruelty and outrage. Come to give life to men, He was seized by men and "crucified and slain."

With the Rationalist that death was no more than the martydom of the greatest of religious teachers. And with half Christendom it was but a step in God's progressive revelation to mankind, and in man's upward progress toward the goal of his high destiny. But with God it is the most stupendous of all the events of time, an event of which the echoes reach back to a past eternity,* and the results shall endure throughout an eternity to come. In truth, it was the supreme crisis of this world's history.†

XXIX. CHRISTIANITY IN ITS HIGHEST ASPECT IS A DIVINE REVELATION TO MANKIND, AND IT HAS A GOSPEL FOR THE INDIVIDUAL.

I insist on this, because until it is recognised and accepted, the question "What is Christianity?" cannot even be understood, much less discussed and answered. The Rationalists' "Christianity" is like a theory of the solar

*1 Peter i. 20; Revelation xii. 6.
†Νῦν κρίσις ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου τούτου. John xii. 31.

system which ignores the sun. Just as those who built the tombs of the prophets declared thereby their kinship with those who slew them, so if men choose to treat Christ and His cross as commonplaces of their religion, they only prove their participation in the guilt of Calvary. What the after world shall bring to those who never heard of Christ it is not given to us to know. But to Christendom that Cross is the supreme revelation of divine wrath against sin, and of divine love to a world of sinners. And this is Christianity in its first and highest aspect; not a religion, still less a philosophy, but a divine revelation of which the person and work of Christ are the sum and substance.

And in this aspect of it Christianity has not merely a message for mankind, it has a gospel for the individual. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." In these words the guiltiest of men can hear the voice of Him who died for us, and who is yet to be our Judge; who knows all our sins and the depths of our sinfulness, and who, knowing all, bids us welcome in the full blessedness of forgiveness and peace and

joy. In this sphere the ignorance and folly of "the wise and prudent" are amazing. They scout the idea of present forgiveness and salvation for the believer in Christ, while they are still more indignant at the suggestion that the future will not bring salvation and forgiveness to all without distinction. But how can we know anything of God and His ways unless it be either from revelation or from nature? If then the Bible be our guide, it is plain as words can make it that the sinner who accepts Christ is forgiven and saved, and that the sinner who does not accept Him is eternally doomed.

But if men refuse the plain testimony of Holy Scripture let them turn to "Nature"; and as an infidel has phased it, "Nature knows nothing of such foolery as forgiveness." Nature is stern and pitiless in punishing. Therefore, as Dr. Westcott has well said, "To reason, the great mystery of the future is not punishment but forgiveness." In view of all this the Rationalist's gospel seeks merely to lure us into a fool's paradise. In view of all this no free thinker, no real sceptic, no man of common sense will be misled by fine words

about "the summits of our inner life," or "the upward development of mankind's history." If we reject the Bible, "Nature" will give us good cause to "faint in weariness and despair." If we accept the gospel, grace will teach us to rejoice "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

XXX. THE TESTIMONY OF EARL CAIRNS.

The newspapers teem with advertisements of remedies for ailments of every kind. And none are so attractive as those which record special cases that have been cured of the treatment. What an endless record of triumphant successes the gospel story of the past unfolds. Right down the centuries, and in all conceivable circumstances of life, in homes of luxury and in scenes of want, in times of prosperity and ease and in dark days of trial and suffering and agony, men—keen, strong-minded men delicate women, and even little children have proved the truth and power of the gospel of Christ. With how great a cloud of witnesses we are compassed round! One special witness I will cite, albeit it involves a departure from the scope of these pages; one who, though

no longer with us, has left a name that will not be soon forgotten—a great statesman, a great lawyer, a great judge, one of the greatest Lord Chancellors of modern times. I refer to the late Earl Cairns. Here are words addressed by him to a company of working men, that included agnostics and infidels who deprecated any reference to "religion" on the occasion:—

"As I am a stranger among you, I do not know that I have any right to intrude my opinion. All I can do is to tell you how this question affects me personally. If I could take you to my home you would think it a luxurious one, and the food on my table is abundant. You would say, 'With all this you ought to be a happy man.' I am indeed a happy man; but I do not think my furniture and food have much to do with it. Every day I rise with a sweet consciousness that God loves me and cares for me. He has pardoned all my sins for Christ's sake, and I look forward to the future with no dread. His Spirit reveals to me that all this peace is only the beginning of joy which is to last throughout eternity. Suppose it were possible for some one to convince me that this happiness was altogether a delusion on my part, my home would give me little repose, and food would often remain upon the table untasted. I should wake in the morning with the feeling that it was scarcely worth while to get up, so

little would there be to live for. The sun might rise, or it might not, all would be dark to me.

"You see, my friends, I could not honestly advise you to do what some of you say you wish to do—to live without God in the world—when all the time, for myself, my heart is crying out, 'For without Thee I cannot live!' It is a pleasure to me to know that the costly things in my house, which you cannot possibly share with me, are not the things out of which my happiness is made. Were they necessary to happiness I should often look round with a sigh, and wonder why they are given to so few. Had I to leave them all tomorrow, and to take to the humblest of homes, I should carry all my joy with me. I rejoice that in my own life what exceeds in value all other things is what I can share with you, for it is within your reach as well as mine. My most earnest desire and prayer for you is that Christ may reveal Himself to you, satisfying, as I know He only can, every desire of your hungry hearts."

XXXI. CHRISTIANITY IN ITS SECONDARY AND MANWARD ASPECT.

These words lead up to the practical side of this great truth. I have spoken of Christianity as being a divine revelation. In its secondary and manward aspect Christianity is the life that befits those who have received this revelation. Faith in Christ is not a

psychological feat, neither is it adherence to a creed or cult. It is accepting a person. "As many as *received Him*, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them *that believe on His name*."* And practical Christianity is to live as "the sons of God, without rebuke, blameless, and harmless."† It is thus that personal loyalty to Christ declares itself, and this is the only "Christian religion" that the New Testament recognises.‡ The Jew had a religion in another sense, the only divine religion the world has ever known. It was designed to teach deep spiritual truths, and to keep the minds of men in a state of expectancy for the full revelation of those truths. It had "a shadow of the coming good things." And when Christ came, those who were spiritual, and understood their religion aright, accepted Him as the realisation and fulfilment of it all. But with the mass, who were unspiritual, and who degraded it to the level of a human religion, it became intensely anti-Christian (as human religion always is), and in its name they rejected and crucified Him. Hence

* John i. 12. † Philippians ii. 15.
‡ See Archbp. T. French's *Synonyms* (θρησκεία).

the prophetic denunciations which the critics so grotesquely misinterpret.* The Jewish altar was a type of Calvary; but when this, its spiritual significance, was ignored, it sank to the pagan level; the victim was but "a slain beast," and the whole rite was both disgusting and profane.

"He is not a Jew who is one outwardly." The true Jew was not "converted to Christ; he accepted Christ as being the One to whose coming his whole religion pointed, and who was the fulfilment of that religion in every part of it. Such was the express declaration of the first disciples: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write." And it was upon "Moses and the prophets" that He Himself based His Messianic claims. This is not theory, but fact, and plain upon the open page of the New Testament. Christianity is avowedly based upon a divine revelation which preceded it; and therefore if the Old Testament be false, Christianity is false. It assumes the truth of the Hebrew Scriptures which the critics decry and denounce.

* See Esc. Gr. Amos, v. 21-27; Is. i. 11-15; Jer. vii. 21-23.

XXXII. DR. HARNACK'S "CHRISTIANITY" IS MERELY A RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY, OR A NEO-BUDDHISM.

Of course it is open to the critics to use the Bible in the way that the cultured Jews now use the New Testament, as a mine from which they can dig out what they are pleased to regard as nuggets, and from the materials thus obtained to frame a system of their own. And this is precisely what Prof. Harnack and his school in Europe and America have done. He dilates upon the undoubted influence of Greek thought in the early church most true it is that the patristic theology was tainted by theories derived from rival systems of pagan philosophy. The old Platonic conception of the "transcendent" Deity—a God far removed from men—leavened the teaching of the Latin Fathers; while the Greek school, under the influence of the Neo-Platonism of which Alexandria was the cradle and the home, leant towards the conception of a Deity "immanent" in the world, and especially in humanity. With the one set of teachers the prominence given to the great truth of the atoning death of Christ relieved

the gloom of a theology in which Divine love to a lost world was well nigh narrowed to favour for such as came within the church. And with the others the Incarnation so overshadowed the Atonement that the balance of Divine truth was entirely lost. But in the one case as in the other the birth and death of Christ were regarded as transcendent mysteries of the faith. Not so, however, with the Rationalists. With them no element of mystery, save such as superstition may have raised, attaches to either Bethlehem or Calvary. Their "Christianity" is merely the outcome of the ministry of the great Rabbi of Nazareth, including "all the later products of its spirit." The result is nothing more than a grand system of religious philosophy, a splendid type of Neo-Buddhism—Buddhism illumined by a personal God. Let them call it Christian Buddhism, if they will. But to call it Christianity is not only unintelligent, but dishonest.

Dishonest, because it is not the Christianity of the New Testament, and no other test or standard of Christianity is legitimate or even possible. If it be Christianity to accord the highest human homage to the Nazarene, to ac-

cept his teaching in so far as it commends itself to us, and to lead pure and devout lives, then infidels of the type of Renan and John Stuart Mill are Christians. And according to the present standard of faith and clerical morality, there is no reason why such men should not become ministers of Christian churches and professors of Christian universities. Their position differs from that of Harnack, Delitzsch, Cheyne and the rest, only in this, that they have the honesty to wear their true colours.

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